

Observations on the existing Ottoman mosques in Albania

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Abstract

The construction of mosques in Albania starts right after the Ottoman sovereignty at the end of the 14th century. The 15th and 16th century mosques were commissioned by the Ottoman administrators or by the Albanian-Ottoman nobles and the ones built after the 16th century were commissioned by the local Muslim notables. Today, only nine mosques that were built during the Ottoman period exist in Albania. The existing mosques are surveyed and evaluated regarding the Ottoman and local Albanian architectural features. The Ottoman architectural features are seen at the last prayer hall and north-west façade of the Leaden, Bayezid II and Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu mosques, the side rivaqs and the courtyard of the Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu Mosque, and the small balcony protruding at the middle part of the women's gallery of the Bayezid II and the Mirahor Ilyas Beg mosques. Whereas, the inset wooden domes covered by a curb roof of Bayezid II Mosque, the two small domes at the center of the last prayer hall of the Leaden Mosque, the cross vaults of the Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu Mosque, the wide last prayer hall area of the Haxhi Et-hem Beg, Beqarëve and the Bayezid II mosques, the decoration of the mihrab and minber, and the wall paintings of the Mirahor Ilyas Beg, the Haxhi Et-hem Beg and the Beqarëve mosques with a different painting technique from the ones in Istanbul and Anatolia are found as local Albanian properties.

Keywords

Mosques in Albania, Mosque architecture, Ottoman architecture.

1. Introduction

Compared to the other parts of the Balkans Albania is relatively far from the center of the Ottoman Empire. The first contact between the Albanians and the Ottomans were in the second half of the 14th century and the *Arnavut İli Sancağı* was established in 1431 (Kiel, 1990, p. 18). The mosques, built till the 17th century, were commissioned by the Ottoman administrators or the Albanians who were recruited and brought up in the Ottoman capital. In the 17th century there was a massive conversion to Islam and from then on quite a number of mosques were commissioned by the local Muslim notables. The “Cultural Revolution” of 1967 demolished the religious buildings either mosques or churches in Albania, almost “erased” them. Today, there are only nine mosques that survive from Ottoman times.

2. Ottoman mosques in Albania

The case study is focused on the plan schemes and interior elements of the existing mosques. The nine existing mosques are the three mosques in Berat, the Bayezid II, the Leadën (Kursunlu) Mosque and the Beqarëve (Bekârlar) Mosque and the Mosque of Muradije (Muradiye) in Vlorë, the Mosque of Pazar in Gjirokaster, the Nazireshtës (Nazire) Mosque in Elbasan, the Haxhi Et-hem Beg (Hacı Ethem Bey) Mosque in Tirana, the Mirahor İlyas Beg (Mirahor İlyas Bey) Mosque in Korçë, the Mosque of Mehmet Pashe Bushatlliu (Mehmed Paşa Buşatlı) is in Shkodër.

2.1. Mosque of Mirahor İlyas Beg in Korçë

The mosque of Mirahor İlyas Beg is the only existing Ottoman monument in the city of Korçë. It is located near the center of the settlement. According to the inscription plate over the entrance written in 1872-1873, the mosque was commissioned by Mirahor İlyas Beg in 901AH (1495-1496), its dome was covered with lead by Mehmed Beg in 1572-1573, repaired by Dervish İslam Beg in 1833-1834 and by Salih Beg in 1868-1869.

The prayer hall of the mosque of Mirahor İlyas Beg has a square plan

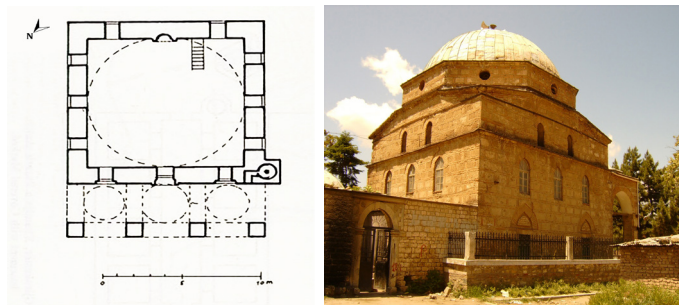


Figure 1. The plan of the Mosque of Mirahor İlyas Beg (M. Kiel, 1990) and south-east (qibla) and north-east façades.



Figure 2. (a) The minber and (b) the women's gallery of the Mirahor İlyas Beg Mosque in Korçë.

scheme of 11.75x11.75 m² and is covered by a dome on squinches. The squinches have muqarnas decoration at the corners and in the middle of the lower part, adjacent to the wall. The last prayer hall covers the north-west façade of the mosque and covered by three domes supported by four piers and pointed arches between them (Figure 1).

The mihrab niche of the mosque with muqarnas rows at the top is adorned with golden gilded and framed by two golden-gilt frames with a rectangular profile. The wooden minber of the mosque is constructed on a wooden base raised from the ground with two steps (Figure 2a). The podium of predication used for the Friday sermons is placed in the north-east wall of the mosque and rests on a white washed half conic console. The podium ends with a wooden balcony.

The women's gallery of the mosque is a narrow wooden balcony along the north-western wall of the prayer hall. The middle part of this structure has a console rectangular balcony protruding into the prayer hall (Figure 2b). The protruding balcony of the women's gallery is found in 19th century Ottoman mosques; therefore, the gallery of the mosque must be a work of Dervish

Islam Beg who made the first repair of the building in 1833-34 or Salih Beg who made the second repair in 1868-69.

The interior walls of the mosque have wall paintings of pictures from different well known and holy mosques and landscapes. The Holy Kaaba is painted at the south-west façade and the Mesdjid-i Nebevi at the north-east. The Mosque of Sultan Ahmed, Hagia Sophia, Mosque of Pertevniyal Valide Sultan, the Tower of Galata, two pictures of the mosque itself, different landscapes and scenes from Istanbul cover the upper parts of the walls. Uçar (2013b: 677) points out that the wall paintings of the mentioned buildings are done from their photographs.

2.2. The Leaden Mosque in Berat

The Leaden Mosque of Berat is one of the best preserved Ottoman buildings in Berat and also in all of Albania. It is the only domed mosque of Berat. The building is situated about five hundred meters east of the Bayezid Mosque, which is located at the city center. It was commissioned by a local Noble called Uzgur Ahmet Beg. Sulejman Dashi (1980: 101) an Albanian scholar gives the date as 1553-1554, which he based on the copy of the inscription once found at the mosque.

The prayer hall has a square plan 12.50x12.50 on the exterior sides and is covered by a dome on squinches. The squinches have melon-like ribs done in the grand manner of the 16th century. The base on which the squinches rest is connected diagonally to the corner of the building using a fine muqarnas in plaster. The last prayer hall extends

to the end of the base of the minaret and the wall that is equal to the length of the base of the minaret and extends on the north-east side of the mosque's façade. It is a closed hall with walls with large windows. Evliya Çelebi (1999:554-568) noted that the building had seven domes. The traces of a curb roof in the north-west façade adjacent to the last prayer hall indicates that there had been an intervention after his visit. Today the last prayer hall has four domes. The large two domes over the lateral parts and two small domes at the center placed next to each other in the mihrab axes cover the last prayed hall. The two small domes are supported by the walls and two marble columns placed at the center of the last prayer hall (Figure 3).

The mosque was restored in 1977-78 to be a museum. The interior elements and decoration was demolished at that time. Therefore, the mihrab, the minber and the wooden women's gallery were constructed after the change of regime and it has the 20th century architectural tradition of the local masters.

2.3. The mosque of Muradije in Vlorë

The mosque of Muradije is the only existing monument built in Vlorë during the Ottoman period. The building is situated on one of the main roads of the city center. Actually, we don't have definite information regarding to its date of construction and the building does not have an inscription plate. Gj. Frasheri and S. Dashi (1988:122) consider its construction as during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent and attribute the mosque to an early work of Architect Sinan.

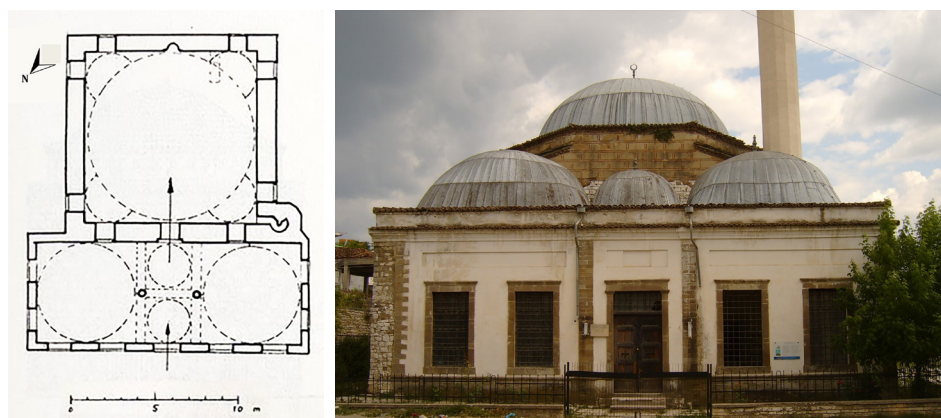


Figure 3. The plan (Kiel, 1990) and the north-west (entrance) façade of the Leaden Mosque in Berat.

Observations on the existing Ottoman mosques in Albania

The prayer hall has a square plan scheme and is covered by a dome. The transition element to the dome is squinch. The squinches have melon like ribs and make a swift transition to the corner of the prayer hall with muqarnas rows at its base. The mosque had a last prayer hall which was destroyed at an uncertain date and only its floor survived. The floor of the last prayer hall has a central passage to the gate of the mosque with higher platforms on both sides. (Figure 4). The base of the minaret makes a projection at the west corner of the building.

The mihrab niche has a five sided plan scheme and the transition to the wall is by muqarnas rows. It is surrounded by a rectangular frame that has palmet leaves at the top. The minber is constructed of wood. The pointed arched doorway of the minber has two wooden columns whose capitals are decorated with diagonal embossed elements. On the balustrades of the minber stairway there is a row of Ottoman pointed arches placed next to each other. The baldachin of the preacher's platform minber has four columns with capitals that are the same as the ones at the door way and is covered by a pointed cross vault. The pointed arches and the pointed cross vault are crowned by a pyramidal cap, which is a local Albanian tradition. The mosque does not have a women's gallery.

2.4. The Mosque of Nazireshtë in Elbasan

The mosque of Nazireshtë is the only preserved mosque of Elbasan. It is located in the southern suburb of Elbasan, a few hundred meters to the north of the river Shkumbin and along National Street. Vehbi Buharaja (1969:81) known for his study on Ottoman inscriptions in Albania says: "The mosque of Nazireshtë was built before the year 1599, as we understand from the two notes in its interior". The referred notes have disappeared due to the white wash of the interior walls today. During the communist regime period the mosque was used as a store and today, it is open only for Friday prayers.

The mosque of Nazireshtë has a

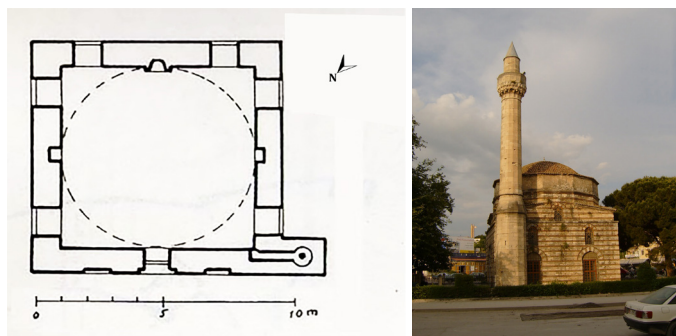


Figure 4. The plan (Kiel: 1990) and the south-west façade of the Muradije Mosque in Vlorë.

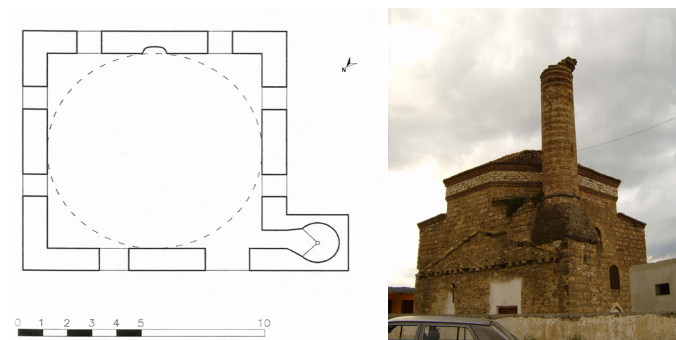


Figure 5. The plan and the north-west and south-east façades of the Nazireshtë Mosque in Elbasan.

square plan scheme and is covered by a dome on squinches. The lower middle part of the squinches is decorated with muqarnas rows to provide a smooth transition to the corner of the walls. The outer dimension of the square is 10.70 m., while the inner space is 8.70 m. The mosque had a last prayer hall when it was constructed. The traces of the diagonal lines of a curb roof, the holes where its beams once plunged into the wall and the existing mihrab niche on the wall are the only remains of the last prayer hall today. The destruction date of the last prayer hall is unknown. The base of the minaret makes a projection at the west corner of the building (Figure 5).

Since the mosque was used as a store during the communist regime much of the interior elements are lost. The mihrab is the only element that survives. The mihrab niche has a five sided plan scheme and the transition to the wall is by muqarnas rows. It has been white washed over and over through the years and lost its brilliance.

2.5. The mosque of Pazar in Gjirokaster

The mosque of Pazar in Gjirokaster

is one of the most beautiful buildings that have survived in South Albania. It is located on a hill side, under the old castle of the city. Down the hill side and below the mosque is the commercial center of the old city, the bazaar (Pazar). The founder of the building is not known but the construction date is stated as 1168 AH (1754-55) in the inscription plate over the entrance door (Kiel, 1990: 41-42).

The mosque of Pazar is situated at the traditional market at an inclined site, which enabled constructing the ground floor as a covered market and the upper floor as a mosque. The platform over the shops is 15.90 m. wide; while the prayer hall with a square plan scheme has a side of 11.40 m. The remaining area at the left side of the mosque was used as a lodge for the imam. The mosque has a single domed square plan and the transition element to the dome is squinch. The last prayer hall covers the north-west façade of the mosque leaving the base of the minaret as an extension on the south-west façade. The three domes of the last prayer hall are supported by round arches and four piers. The access to the last prayer hall is provided by a half-pace stairs. The floor of the central part of the last prayer hall has the same height as the landing of the stairs till the door of the mosque while the flanking parts have a higher floor level. (Figure 6).

The mihrab due to the several paintings has lost its original niche contour and muqarnas details. The mihrab niche is bordered by narrow and tall semicircular planed niches over rectangle pilasters on the two sides. There is no original minber in this mosque.

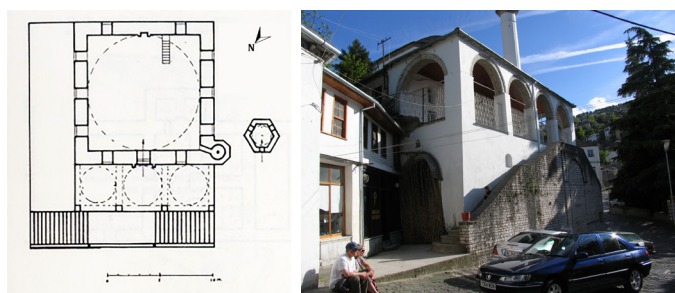


Figure 6. The plan (Kiel: 1990) and the south-west façade of the Pazar Mosque in Gjirokaster.

2.6. The mosque of Mehmet Pashe Bushatlliu in Shkodër

The mosque of Mehmet Pashe Bushatlliu is the only building left in Shkodër that was built in the Ottoman period. At the same time, it is the largest building in Shkodër and in Albania. The mosque is located in the Bahçallek quarter, just at the foot of the Rozafat Castle in a meadow along the Drin River. It was built by Mehmet Pashe Bushatlliu, the governor of the *İşkodra Sancağı* (Shkodër Sanjak) and the construction was completed in 1773-74 just a year before he died. It was repaired in 1863-64. The mosque has similarities with the imperial mosques of İstanbul to show the power of Mehmet Pashe Bushatlliu regarding the relation between the local lord and the sultan (Kiel, 1990:232). The mosque fell into disuse after the massive flood which swept away that part of the city in 1865. The minaret was torn down during the Cultural Revolution. The mosque started to be used after the change of regime in Albania.

The Mosque of Mehmet Pashe Bushatlliu is of large dimension and has a different plan scheme compared to the other mosques in Albania. It is the only mosque in Albania that has a courtyard. The prayer hall has a single domed square plan scheme, with an internal side length of approximately 10 m. The mihrab area makes an extension in the form of a rectangular niche from the prayer hall and is covered by a semi dome on squinches. The transition element to the main dome is pendentives (Kiel, 1990: 233). At the north-east of the prayer hall there is a side rivaq that covers the three quarters of the façade. The rivaq is covered by three domes supported by three round arches resting on two columns and the masonry walls on both sides (Figure 7).

At the western corner of the prayer hall, the base of the minaret protruded in a long horizontal rectangular form. Next to it there is another side rivaq covering the half of the south-west façade filling the gap between the base of the minaret and the wall of the mosque. The rivaq is covered by two domes supported by two round arches resting on a column and a masonry wall at each side. At the south-west, ad-

adjacent to the prayer hall and the outer rivaq there is a tomb with an “L” plan scheme. The tomb has large round arch openings, two on the south-west façade and one on the south-east façade. According to Kiel (1990:233) the tomb was once covered by a wooden roof. The last prayer hall covers the distance between the outer lines of the outer rivaqs of the mosque forming a horizontal band with even extensions from the high mass of the mosque. Four columns and round arches support the roofing system consisting of alternately placed cross vaults and domes. The cross vaults are at the center and, at the sides with the domes in between. The courtyard has a rectangular plan scheme, and its outer dimensions are 19.60 x 15.40 m. The rivaq of the courtyard has columns that support round arches with iron tie bars. The side rivaqs are covered by two domes and the rivaq at the entrance of the courtyard repeats the cross vault and dome arrangement at the last prayer hall. The floor level of the rivaq is about 40 cm. higher than that of the courtyard. The columns have capitals adorned with floral embossed motives.

The interior elements of the mosque have lost their original character as it has been abandoned since 1865.

2.7. The mosque of Haxhi Et-hem Beg in Tirana

The mosque of Et-hem Beg is the best maintained mosque in Albania and the only one surviving from the Ottoman period in Tirana today (Figure 22). It is located at the center of the city. The

construction of the Haxhi Et-hem Beg Mosque was started by Molla Beg who was the grand-son of the founder of Tirana Sulejman Pashë Mulleti in 1793-94 (1208 AH). The minaret, the last prayer hall and the paintings were finished by the son of Molla Beg, Haxhi Et-hem Beg in 1822-23 (1238 AH) (Rey & Ceka, 1935:251). After the construction of the mosque with the commercial center in front, Tirana became an attractive settlement. The building went through several maintenance restorations in 1960-63, 1969 and 1974. After the regime changed in Albania, the mosque is now used with its original function.

The mosque is built over a platform of approximately 0.80 m. higher than the ground level. The prayer hall of the mosque has a single domed square plan scheme with sides of 10.50 m. The transition element to the dome is squinch. The last prayer hall has an “L” form plan scheme covering the north-east as well as the traditional the north-west (entrance) façade of the prayer hall. Kiel (1990:251) suggests that the building must have been surrounded by other buildings and the site at that time was not suitable for the construction of the south-west wing of the last prayer hall. The last prayer hall is a wide one extending from the prayer hall at the entrance façade with three arched bays. It is covered by a tilted curb roof having an eave protruding approximately 1.00 m. At the north-west (entrance) façade there are 6 bays. The second bay from the right has piers with column like pilasters on the outer side and a door

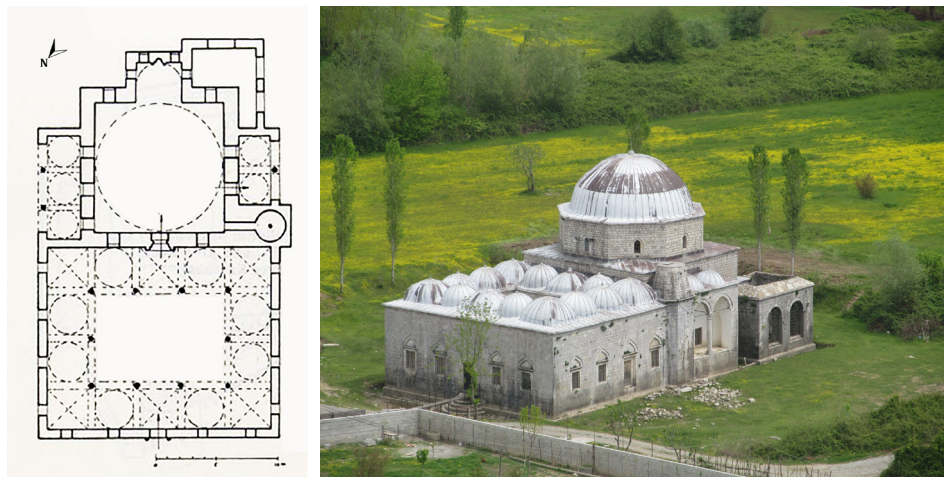


Figure 7. The plan (Kiel: 1990) and view from the west of the Mehmet Pashe Bushatlliu Mosque in Shkodër (Çağhan Keskin).

frame in the inner side. The arch above the gate is a blind round arch. The last prayer hall has seven bays at the north-east and three bays at the south-west sides. All the bays consist of columns and round arches. The south-east façade of the last prayer hall is a wall with a mihrab niche on it. Just at the left of the last prayer hall gate there are stairs leading to the ablutions fountains of the mosque. The access to the last prayer hall is with four steps designed with a semicircular plan. The last prayer hall floors on both sides of the passage to the mosque are approximately 0.45 m higher (Figure 8).

The mihrab has a semicircular plan scheme and the transition to the wall surface is through a conical form. It is surrounded by a frame of decorated bands. The wooden minber of the building is maintained in good state. The lateral parts of it are covered by a complete triangle, which begins from the lower part of the stairs and ends in the landing part. The balustrade consists of slim vertical wooden elements. The door of the minber has a gold-



Figure 8. The plan (Meksi and Frasheri: 1977) and general view of the Haxhi Et-hem Beg Mosque from Skenderbeg Square in Tirana (Şükrü Sönmezer).



Figure 9. (a) the minber and (b) the interior of the Haxhi Et-hem Beg Mosque in Tirana.

en-gilt arch. The preacher's platform of the minber has a wooden baldachin which is surrounded by a cornice and covered with a pyramidal cap crowned by a crescent (Figure 9 (a)).

The wooden women's gallery covers the entrance side of the payer hall and is supported by two marble columns which are adjacent to the lateral walls. There is a small balcony protruding at the middle part of the women's gallery with a rectangular plan. The access to the gallery is from the stairs of the minaret which has the entrance from the prayer hall and thus must have been constructed at the same time as the mosque (Figure 9 (b)).

The interior walls of the mosque and the walls of the last prayer hall have wall paintings of mosques, city scenes and landscape as well as floral decorations (Figure 8 (a) and (b)). At the prayer hall, the wall paintings begin from the upper level of the first row windows. The paintings are placed in rectangular frames and continue all around the interior walls (Figure 9 (b)). On the walls there are three, on the transition zone one and on the dome three rows of paintings, perhaps symbolizing the seven levels of the Heaven. Most of the decoration consists of floral motifs. Beside the floral decoration at the transition zone row there are scenes of imaginary Ottoman mosques, palaces, towns and landscape pictures. At the last prayer hall, the wall paintings are on the walls of the building and on the walls above the arches of the rivaq on the façade. On the walls it begins above the lower row windows as two rows. Here also, the scenes of imaginary Ottoman mosques, palaces, towns and landscape pictures are placed in the floral motifs (Figure 10).



Figure 10. An imaginary scenes on the last prayer hall of the Haxhi Et-hem Beg Mosque in Tirana.

2.8. The mosque of Beqarëve in Berat

The mosque of Beqarëve is situated at the lower part of Mangalem quarter of Berat along the main street of the city that once was the old commercial center. The mosque was commissioned by Sulejman Pashë Vlorë in 1243 AH (1827/28) (Ekrem Bey Vlorë, 1911:61), but in fact it is known popularly as “Mosque of Beqarëve” (mosque of Bachelors).

The mosque is constructed at a hill side and the rock ground was partially cut to obtain a platform while the street side is pulled to that level with a substructure of three barrel vaults. The barrel vaults are supported by four columns and the space is used as shops. The plan scheme of the prayer hall consists of a rectangle having sides 11.25 x 9.63m. long (Figure 11). At equal distances from the lateral sides and almost four meters from the entrance wall, two wooden posts, supporting three segmental arches, divide the central prayer hall into south-eastern and north-western parts. These posts carry the ceiling and the saddle roof of the prayer hall. The division is further emphasized with the different decorations on the walls and the ceiling.

The last prayer hall has a plan a scheme in the form of an “L”. It has a width of 16.90 m. and extends 2.45 meters from each of the lateral parts of the prayer hall. At the south-west of end the last prayer hall extends till the base of the minaret covering the one-fourth of the prayer hall’s façade. The curb roof of the last prayer hall is supported by round arches with iron tie beams resting on “L” formed masonry piers at the corners and columns in between. The floor level of the passage to the prayer hall is about 50 cm. lower than the floor level of the last prayer hall on both sides.

The mihrab of the mosque ends in a conical shape on which motives of triangular shape are painted, giving the image of muqarnas. There is no original minber in this mosque.

The wall paintings are at the façade, in the prayer hall and in the last prayer hall of the mosque. The scenes of imaginary Ottoman mosques, palaces, towns and landscape pictures take place in the floral decoration in rows

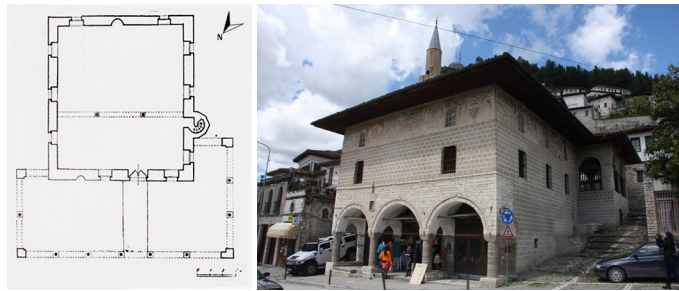


Figure 11. The plan (Meksi and Frasheri: 1977) and a general view of the mosque of Beqarëve in Berat (Şükrü Sönmezer).



Figure 12. Wall paintings on the façade of the mosque of Beqarëve in Berat.

(Figure 12). Uçar refers to the architectural paintings as imaginary Istanbul scenes (Uçar, 2013a:1173).

2.9. The mosque of Bayezid II in Berat

The mosque of Bayezid II is located in the northern part of the main square which is practically the center of Berat. Locally it is named as the mosque of the Ruler (King). Evliya Çelebi (1999: 693) described the mosque and attributed it to Sultan Bayezid II, who could have ordered its construction when he passed through Berat during the Albanian campaign in 1492. According to the inscription found by Vehbi Buharaja, the reconstruction of the mosque was finished in the year 1248 AH (1832-1833) and was commissioned by the Ottoman Grand Vizier Mehmed Reşit Pasha (Frasheri & Dashi, 1988: 122). Kiel (1990: 55) visited the building in 1967 and saw that the building was the same as described by Evliya Çelebi. In his visit to Berat in 1978, the building had changed totally and was convert-

ed to a store for the municipality. The building was restored in 1983 and the later additions were removed and used as a museum. Today it functions as a mosque.

The prayer hall of the mosque is a rectangle of 16.85 x 13.95 m., approximately the same as given by Evliya Çelebi (1999: 693) who mentioned 50 x 60 feet. (Figure 32). Two large domes at the center and four octagonal (close to an elliptic form) smaller domes on each side cover the hall. The domes are inset domes constructed of wood covered by a curb roof, which is supported by two wooden posts in the hall. The base of the minaret protrudes from the west corner and a wall of the same size where the landing of the women's gallery's stair rests protrudes from the east corner of the building. The last prayer hall covers the north-west façade of the mosque along both ends of the base of the minaret and the protruding wall on the opposite side. It is a wide space in three aisles. The pitched tilted roof of the last prayer hall is supported by round arches resting on "L" shaped piers and columns in between. There are two mihrab niches on its wall. (Figure 13).

When the building was converted to a store for the municipality, the walls were white washed but the mihrab, minber, women's gallery and the ceiling were preserved. The mihrab has a semi-circular plan scheme and the transition to the wall surface is through muqarnas rows. On both sides of the niche there is a pilaster in the form of a column. The minber is a wooden structure. The stairs leading the preacher's platform is

supported by three half arches resting on posts and the preacher's platform rests on a round arch. This construction of the stairs is a technique used by local masters in vernacular houses in the region. The preacher's platform has a baldachin with a conic cap.

The women's gallery is constructed over the wooden posts in the back of the prayer hall and its middle part protrudes as a balcony with semi-circular plan scheme, while its lateral parts extend until to the load bearing posts of the domes on both sides. Its balustrade is made by finely carved wooden elements. The entrance to the gallery is from the stairs outside the prayer hall at the north corner of the building. Since there was not a women's gallery in the 15th century mosques, this gallery was constructed during the reconstruction works of Grand Vizier Mehmed Reşit Paşa in 1829-33 (Frasheri and Dashi, 1988:122).

3. Conclusion

The existing mosques built during the Ottoman period in Albania carry features that are strongly related to socio-politico-cultural situation of the time they were constructed. The Mosque of Bayezid II (1492) was built for the spiritual needs of the Ottoman army. The Mosque of Mirahor Ilyas Beg (1495) was commissioned by Mirahor Ilyas Beg¹ who was an Albanian brought up in the Ottoman palace and the son-in-law of Sultan Murad II. The mosques of the 16th century, the Lead-en Mosque (1553) and the Mosque of Nazireshtës (1599) were built by Albanian-Ottoman nobles. In the 17th cen-

¹ Mirahor Ilyas Beg was born in 1408 in the village of Panarit in Korçë. He was recruited to be a janissary. Later he was appointed to the post of director of the stables (emir-i ahur) and thus had the title of Mirahor. At the same time he was the tutor (lala) of Sultan Bayezid II when he was a prince (Mehmed, 1996: 188).

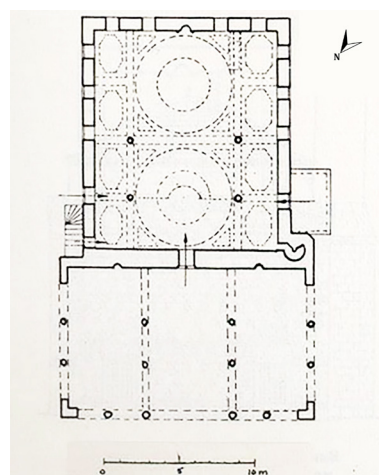


Figure 13. The plan (Kiel: 1990) and a general view of the mosque of Bayezid II in Berat.

tury, the massive conversion to Islam caused an increase in the number of mosque constructions commissioned by the local Muslim notables of which none survive today. The political situation in the 18th century developed local aristocrats in Albania. The Mosque of Pazar (1754-55) and the Mosque of Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu ² (1773-74) were commissioned by those aristocrats. The 19th century mosques were the Haxhi Et-hem Beg Mosque (1793-94/1822-23), commissioned by the grandson of the founder of the city, and the Beqarëve Mosque (1827-28).

Most of the plan schemes of the prayer halls including the Mosque of Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu, are square except the rectangular plan scheme of the Mosques of Bayezid II and of Beqarëve. The square mosques are covered by single domes. The rectangular praying hall of the Beqarëve Mosque is covered by a wooden saddle roof. The rectangular prayer hall of Bayezid II is covered by two large domes at the center and four octagonal smaller domes on each side constructed of wood as inset domes and covered by a curb roof. The domes of the Bayezid II Mosque were constructed during the reconstruction of the mosque in 1832-1833. The inset dome construction was a specific architectural tradition in the Balkans as of the 18th century (Kiel, 2000: 47).

The last prayer halls of the mosques of Muradije and Nazireshtës were demolished. The last prayer hall of the Leaden Mosque, Bayezid II Mosque and Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu Mosque cover the base of the minaret and make an extension of the same length as the base of the minaret on the north-east side. This last prayer hall design, making an extension wall on the other side, was widely used by Architect Sinan in mosque design. The two small domes at the center of the last prayer hall of the Leaden Mosque and the cross vaults of the Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu Mosque are unique examples and must be local Albanian designs. Also the wide last prayer hall area, which is not common in Ottoman mosques, of the Haxhi Et-hem Beg, Beqarëve and the Bayezid II mosques are local designs. The Mosque of Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu is the only

mosque in Albania that has a courtyard that is common in Ottoman mosque designs.

The side rivaqs of the Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu Mosque fill the gap between the base of the minaret on one side and the wall extension on the other side to unify the mass of the building. This architectural solution is observed in Architect Sinan's mosques and one of the best examples is the Selimiye Mosque where the galleries are placed between the bases of the minarets.

The mosques of Beqarëve and Pazar were constructed on the first floor over shops in the commercial center of the settlement as seen in Istanbul Rüstem Pasha and Piyale Pasha mosques of Architect Sinan. But the lodge of the imam placed along the east façade of the Pazar mosque on the first floor having access from the last prayer hall is a unique local design.

The women's galleries of the Muradije Mosque, Leaden Mosque, Nazireshtës Mosque and Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu Mosque are new structures added after 1992 and the Mosque of Pazar does not have one. The women's galleries of the mosques of Bayezid II, Mirahor Ilyas Beg and Haxhi Et-hem Beg are works of 19th century. The women's gallery of the Mosque of Bayezid II was constructed during the reconstruction work of Grand Vizier Mehmed Reşit Pasha in 1829-33. The one at the Mosque of Mirahor Ilyas Beg must be a work of Dervish Islam Beg who conducted the first repair of the building in 1833-34 or Salih Beg who conducted the second repair in 1868-69. The women's gallery of the Mosque of Haxhi Et-hem Beg is a work of Molla Beg built in 1793-94 or Et-hem Beg who completed the construction in 1822-23.

The women's gallery of the Haxhi Et-hem Beg and the Mirahor Ilyas Beg mosques lies along the entrance wall (north-west) of the building where as the one at the Bayezid II Mosque continues along the side walls (south-west and north-east) till the middle of the praying hall below the side domes forming a "U" plan scheme. The small balcony protruding at the middle part of the women's gallery of the Bayezid II Mosque and Haxhi Et-hem Beg Mosque as rectangular plan and the

² The founder of the mosque Sulejman Pasha was the son of Ibrahim Pashë Vlorë who was the governor of the province of Vlorë (Avlonya) in 1240 AH (1824-25) and Berat was the capital of the province (Mehmed, 1996: 95-96).

one of Mirahor Ilyas Beg Mosque as a semicircular plan became an architectural feature of the 19th century Ottoman mosques of the capital and the provinces. The mihrab and the minber of these mosques show local workmanship regarding their decoration.

Most of the mosques that are surveyed have wall paintings done in recent years. The Mirahor Ilyas Beg, the Haxhi Et-hem Beg and the Beqarëve mosques have original wall paintings. They cover the interior walls and façades of both the prayer hall and the last prayer halls of these mosques. The remarkable point of the wall paintings is that the scenes of imaginary Ottoman mosques, palaces, towns and landscape pictures take place in the floral decoration which is applied in rows. The earliest examples of the scenes of mosques, palaces, towns and landscape pictures as wall painting are seen in the 18th century in the Ottoman architecture in the capital (Cezar, 1995: 92). The wall painting of such scenes spread to the provinces in Anatolia and Balkans in the 19th century and were executed in the buildings commissioned by the local aristocrats who emulate the capital (Renda & Erol, 1980: 65). The wall paintings of the Albanian mosques have similarities in style with the ones in Anatolia but differences in painting technique (Uçar, 2013a: 1173-1174). The difference in the painting technique shows that a significant local Albanian art existed in the region.

The nine mosques that still exist from the Ottoman period in Albania are integrated with the local features and show similarities with the Ottoman mosques in the vicinity of the capital. The local features are seen in the construction techniques, decorations and in some of them in the plan schemes. They are the existing monuments of a synthesized common culture of the Ottomans and Albanians.

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Arnavutluk'daki mevcut Osmanlı camileri üzerine gözlemler

Arnavutluk'ta cami inşaatı bölgenin 14. Yüzyılda Osmanlı hâkimiyeti altına girmesinden hemen sonra başlamıştır. 1967 yılındaki Kültür Devrimi'nden sonra Arnavutluk'ta cami veya kilise olsun tüm dini yapılar yok edilmiştir. Bugün tüm ülkede Osmanlı döneminde inşa edilmiş dokuz cami bulunmaktadır. Mevcut camiler Berat'ta II. Bayezid, Leaden (Kurşunlu) ve Beqarëve (Bekârlar) camileri, Vlorë'da (Avlonya) Muradije (Muradiye) Camii, Gjirokaster'da Pazar Camii, Elbasan'da Nazireshe (Nazire) Camii, Tiran'da Haxhi Et-hem Beg (Hacı Ethem Bey) Camii, Korçë'da (Korça) Mirahor İlyas Beg (Mirahor İlyas Bey) Camii ve Shkodër'da (İşkodra) Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu (Mehmed Paşa Buşatlı) Camiidir. Bu çalışmada, Balkanlar'daki diğer bölgelere kıyasla Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun merkezine nispeten uzak olan Arnavutluk'taki mevcut camilerin plan şemaları ve iç mekân özellikleri üzerinde durularak Osmanlı ve yerel Arnavutluk mimari özellikleri belirlenip değerlendirilecektir.

Mevcut Osmanlı dönemi camilerinin mimari özellikleri inşa edildikleri dönemin sosyal, politik ve kültürel ortamı ile yakın ilişkiler sergiler. II. Bayezid Camii (1492) bölgedeki Osmanlı ordusunun dini ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için inşa edilmiştir. Mirahor İlyas Beg Camii (1495) Arnavutluk'tan devşirilmiş Sultan II. Murad'ın damadı olan Mirahor İlyas Bey tarafından yaptırılmıştır. Leaden Camii (1553) ve Nazireshe (1599) Camii Arnavut- Osmanlı soyluları tarafından inşa ettirilmişlerdir. 17 yüzyılda Arnavutluk'ta büyük kitlelerin İslam dinini kabul etmesi nedeniyle, bu dönemde bölgenin yerel Müslüman ileri gelenleri tarafından inşa ettirilen cami sayısı artmıştır. Bu yüzyılda inşa edilen camilerden hiç biri günümüze kalmamıştır. Arnavutluk'ta 18. Yüzyıldaki politik ortam yerel aristokratların ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Pazar Camii (1754-55) ve Mehmed Pashë Bushatlliu (1773-74) Camii bu aristokratlar tarafından inşa edilmiş yapılardır. 19. yüzyıl camileri ise Tiran şehrinin kurucusu tarafından yaptırılan Haxhi Et-hem Beg Camii (1793-94/1822-23) ile Beqarëve Cami-

idir (1827-28).

Plan şemaları dikdörtgen olan II. Bayezid ve Beqarëve camileri dışındaki camilerin plan şemaları karedir. Kare planlı camiler tek kubbe ile örtülüdür. Dikdörtgen planlı Beqarëve Camii ahşap beşik çatı, II. Bayezid Camii ise üstü beşik çatı olan ortada iki büyük yanlarda dörder küçük sekizgen ahşap gömme kubbe ile örtülmüştür. Ahşap gömme kubbe örtü tekniği tüm Balkanlar'da yaygın bir uygulama olarak 18. ve 19. yüzyıllarda görülmektedir.

Muradije ve Nazireshe camilerinin son cemaat yerleri yok olmuştur. Leaden, II. Bayezid ve Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu camilerinde son cemaat yeri cami kütesinden taşan minare kaidesini içine alıp diğer tarafta da minare kaidesi kadar kütlede taşar. Bu son cemaat yeri tasarımı Mimar Sinan tarafından yaygın olarak uygulanmıştır. Leaden Camii son cemaat yerinin orta kısmındaki iki kubbe ve Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu Camiinin son cemaat yerindeki çapraz tonozlar sıra dışı örnekler olup yerel Arnavut ustaların tasarımları olmalıdır. Aynı zamanda, Osmanlı cami mimarisinde görülmeyen Haxhi Et-hem Beg, Beqarëve ve II. Bayezid camilerinin geniş son cemaat yerleri de yerel tasarımlardır. Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu Camii Arnavutluk'ta Osmanlı cami mimarisindeki avluya sahip tek camidir.

Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu Camiinde yan dış revaklar giriş cephesinin bir tarafındaki minare kaidesi ile diğer tarafındaki duvar uzantısı ile cami yapısı arasındaki boşluğu doldurarak kütlede bütünlüğünü sağlar. Bu mimari çözüm Mimar Sinan'ın cami tasarımlarında da görülür ve en iyi örneği minare kaidesi arasına yerleştirilmiş olan Selimiye Camii dış galerileridir.

Beqarëve ve Pazar camileri Mimar Sinan'ın İstanbul Rüstem Paşa ve Piya-le Paşa camilerinde olduğu gibi yerleşmenin ticaret bölgesinde zemin katta dükkânların bulunduğu tahtâni camilerdendir. Fakat Pazar Camiindeki son cemaat yerinden girişi olan camiin doğu cephesini kaplayan bir imam evi özgün yerel bir tasarımdır.

Muradije, Leaden, Nazireshe ve Mehmet Pashë Bushatlliu camilerinin kadınlar mahfilleri 1992 yılından sonra inşa edilmiş yeni eklerdir, Pazar

Camiinin kadınlar mahfili ise bulunmamaktadır. II. Bayezid, Mirahor Ilyas Beg ve Haxhi Et-hem Beg camilerinin kadınlar mahfilleri 19. yüzyılda inşa edilmiştir. II. Bayezid Camiinin kadınlar mahfili 1829-33 yıllarında yapının Sadrazam Mehmed Reşit Paşa tarafından onarımı sırasında inşa edilmiştir. Mirahor Ilyas Beg Camiindeki ise 1833-34 yılında yapının ilk onarımını gerçekleştiren Dervish İslam Beg veya 1868-69 yılında ikinci onarımı yapan Salih Beg tarafından inşa edilmiştir. Haxhi Et-hem Beg Camii kadınlar mahfili de ya 1793-94 yılında Molla Beg veya 1822-23 yılında inşaatı tamamlayan Et-hem Beg tarafından yaptırılmıştır.

Kadınlar mahfili Haxhi Et-hem Beg ve Mirahor Ilyas Beg camilerinde yapının giriş iç cephesi (kuzeybatı) boyunca uzanır. II. Bayezid Camiinde ise giriş iç cephede yer alan mahfil her iki yan duvar boyunca (güneybatı ve kuzeydoğu) harimin ortalarına kadar yan kubbeler altında uzayan “U” plan şemasına sahiptir. II. Bayezid ve Haxhi Et-hem Beg camilerinde dikdörtgen, Mirahor Ilyas Beg Camiinde ise yarım daire plan şemalı olan kadınlar mahfilinin orta kısmından konsol çıkan balkon Osmanlı başkenti ve eyaletlerinde 19. yüzyılda ortaya çıkan bir mimari özelliktir. Bu camilerin mihrab ve minberleri bezemeleri açısından yerel işçilik özellikleri gösterir.

İncelenen camilerin çoğunda yakın tarihlerde yapılmış kalemşi duvar bezemesi bulunmaktadır. Bu yapılardan Mirahor Ilyas Beg, Haxhi Et-hem Beg ve Beqarëve camilerinde ise özgün ka-

lemşi bezemenin yanı sıra özgün duvar resimleri de günümüze kalmıştır. Bu camilerdeki duvar bezemesi (kalemşi, duvar resmi) harim ve son cemaat yerinin iç ve dış duvarlarında bulunmaktadır. Duvar bezemesinde hayali Osmanlı camileri, sarayları, şehirleri ve kır manzaraları bitkisel motifli çerçeveler içinde yatay bantlar halinde duvar yüzeyinde yer alır. Osmanlı mimarlığında ilk başkentte 18. yüzyılda görülmeye başlanan cami, saray, şehir ve kır manzaralı duvar resimleri 19. yüzyılda Anadolu ve Balkanlar’daki eyaletlere de yayılmıştır. Eyaletlerde duvar resimleri başkentin konumu ile kendini özleştiren yerel aristokratlar tarafından inşa ettirilen yapılarda görülmektedir. Arnavutluk’taki camilerde gördüğümüz duvar resimleri başkent ve Anadolu’daki duvar resimleri ile üslup açısından benzerlik göstermekle birlikte boyama tekniği açısından farklılık göstermektedir. Duvar resimlerinin boyama tekniğindeki farklılık 19. yüzyılda Arnavutluk’ta önemli bir yerel sanat ortamının varlığına işaret etmektedir.

Arnavutluk’ta günümüze kalmış Osmanlı döneminde inşa edilmiş olan dokuz cami Osmanlı başkenti ve çevresinde inşa edilmiş camilerle temelde benzerlikler göstermekle birlikte yerel mimari geleneklerle iç içe geçmiş bir bütünlüğe sahiptir. Yerel mimari özellikler yapım teknikleri, mimari bezeme ve bazı camilerde de plan şemalarındaki farklılıklar olarak tanımlanabilir. Bu çalışmada incelenen camiler sergiledikleri mimari özellikleri ile Osmanlı ve Arnavut ortak kültürünün sentezi olan anıt yapılarıdır.